

Message Text

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62

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ARA-16 EA-11 NEA-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 SAJ-01 DRC-01 /154 W

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R 191608Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4039

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY FREETOWN

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS

AMEMBASSY BLANTYRE

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

AMEMBASSY SUVA

AMEMBASSY MASERU

AMEMBASSY VALLETTA

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMCONSUL BELIZE

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, GY

SUBJECT: FURTHER PRESS COMMENT ON FOREIGN MINISTER RAM-
PHAL'S CANDIDACY AS COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY GENERAL

REF: LONDON 12035 (NOTAL)

1. FOLLOWING COMMENTARY IN FINANCIAL TIMES ON SEPTEMBER 17, THE TIMES, ON SEPTEMBER 18, HAS AN ARTICLE CLAIMING THAT SIR SHRIDATH RAMPHAL, FOREIGN MINISTER OF GUYANA, IS THE FRONT RUNNER TO SUCCEED ARNOLD SMITH AS COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY GENERAL. TIMES CLAIMS THAT ALTHOUGH HE IS 60 AND HAS BEEN ON JOB FOR TEN YEARS, SMITH WOULD BE WILLING, IF ASKED, TO ACCEPT ANOTHER FIVE-YEAR TERM. FEELING AMONG COMMONWEALTH MEMBER GOVERNMENTS, HOWEVER, IS THAT IT IS A TIME FOR A CHANGE.

2. TIMES SAYS THAT RAMPHAL HAS BACKING OF PRIME MINISTER FORBES BURNHAM, AND THAT SIR JOHN CARTER, GUYANA'S HIGH COMMISSIONER IN LONDON, HAS VISITED INDIA AND A NUMBER OF AFRICAN COUNTRIES IN RECENT MONTHS DRUMMING UP SUPPORT FOR RAMPHAL'S CANDIDACY.

3. TIMES ARTICLE GOES ON TO SAY THAT ONLY OTHER OFFICIAL CANDIDATE SO FAR IS FORMER UGANDAN PRESIDENT MILTON OBOTE, WHO WAS NOMINATED BY IDI AMIN.

4. COMPLICATION IN CHOOSING SUCCESSOR, TIMES SAYS, IS FACT THAT ARCHBISHOP MAKARIOS, WHO WAS SENIOR COMMONWEALTH HEAD OF GOVERNMENT BEFORE BEING OVERTHROWN, WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR ACCEPTING NOMINATIONS. SINCE MAKARIOS' DOWNFALL, COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT HAS BEEN UNABLE TO DISCOVER WHETHER HE HAS RECEIVED ANY OTHER NOMINATIONS THAN OBOTE AND RAMPHAL. IT IS EXPECTED THAT PRESIDENT NYERERE OF TANZANIA WILL TAKE OVER FROM MAKARIOS.

5. TIMES CONCLUDES WITH COMMENT THAT BRITISH HAVE NOT MADE ANY NOMINATIONS YET, BUT WITH TONGUE IN CHEEK, PREDICTS THAT VICTOR IN NEXT MONTH'S ELECTION COULD OFFER IT AS A CONSOLATION PRIZE TO THE LOSER.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ELECTION CANDIDATES, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 SEP 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974LONDON12169
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740263-0903
From: LONDON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740932/aaaabavx.tel
Line Count: 108
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: LONDON 12035 (NOTAL)
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: garlanwa
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 25 JUN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <25 JUN 2002 by maustmc>; APPROVED <16-Aug-2002 by garlanwa>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FURTHER PRESS COMMENT ON FOREIGN MINISTER RAM- PHAL'S CANDIDACY AS COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY GENERAL
TAGS: PFOR, GY, (RAMPHAL, SHRIDATH), (OBOTE, MILTON)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005